



Rick joins with residents who will be receiving the new water service in breaking ground for a \$1 million federally funded water system for the Seven Mile Ford area in Smyth County

Seven Mile Ford Water Project Groundbreaking

April 12, 2010

Seven Mile Ford, Virginia

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I am pleased to join you in Seven Mile Ford today in breaking ground on a new, federally funded public water system, which will provide safe and reliable water service for the first time to 50 homes and businesses in Smyth County.

Adequate and reliable public water systems are essential to maintaining the high quality of life in Southwest Virginia as well as to achieving our economic development goals for the region. For these reasons, working with our area's leaders to expand our water and wastewater infrastructure is one of my highest priorities. As part of that effort, I have worked with Smyth County officials for a number of years to secure federal funding to expand the County's water infrastructure, and that effort has been successful. Just last week, I joined with many of you here today to mark a significant step forward in expanding the County's water infrastructure with the completion of construction on a federally funded water system, which is now providing Rich Valley residents with public water service for the first time.

Today, we mark another step forward in our efforts to expand Smyth County's public water infrastructure as construction begins on a new water system to serve 50 homes in Seven Mile Ford. Currently, these residents rely on private wells which have both poor water quality and inadequate water quantity. Residential growth in this area has been limited due to the poor water quality.

To address this problem, at my urging, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, through its Rural Development Agency provided federal funding totaling nearly \$1 million to the Smyth

County Board of Supervisors for the construction of a new water system to serve a portion of the Seven Mile Ford community. Of that total amount, \$686,000 was provided in the form of a federal grant, and \$285,000 was provided as a low-interest federal loan. In addition, Smyth County is providing nearly \$200,000 to advance the project.

With the benefit of the federal funds, construction is now underway on the new water system. As part of the project, 36,000 feet of water lines are being installed along Pioneer Road, Fox Valley Road, Shale Bank Road and Murray Road to provide water service to more than 50 residents. In addition, fire protection will be provided to the community as 10 fire hydrants are installed. Construction on the project is scheduled to be completed later this year.

The new water system will improve the quality of life for the residents of this portion of the Seven Mile Ford community by providing access to safe and reliable public water service for the first time. The presence of the new water system will also enable future growth in the number of residents in the area.

I would like to take this opportunity to recognize a number of individuals whose efforts have been vital to advancing the new water system for Seven Mile Ford.

I would like to thank Travis Jackson, Area Director for the Rural Development Agency, and his excellent staff for their outstanding work to secure the USDA funds for this project.

I also want to thank Charlie Clark, Chairman of the Smyth County Board of Supervisors, Todd Dishner, who represents this area on the Board, as well as the other members of the Board for their longstanding work to improve the quality of life for Smyth County residents.

Michael Carter, Acting County Administrator for Smyth County, and Scott Simpson, Smyth County Engineer, also deserve our thanks today for their excellent efforts to see this project through to completion.

Finally, I would like to thank Derek Lyall, my Project Manager, for his continued work in support of water projects throughout the Ninth Congressional District.

The construction which begins today in Seven Mile Ford represents a significant step forward in our ongoing efforts to expand our region's water and wastewater infrastructure. I would like to thank everyone here for the cooperation and successful work toward the construction of the new water system and offer special congratulations to the residents who will soon be receiving safe and reliable public water service.